

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BLANTY 00569 130127Z

12

ACTION AF-06

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R 121330Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7956

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

C O N F I D E N T I A L BLANTYRE 0569

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, UK, MI

SUBJ: PRES BANDA'S RETURN FROM LONDON VISIT

SATURDAY MORNING PRES BANDA RETURNED FROM HIS PRIVATE VISIT TO LONDON. HE LOOKED TIRED AND TENSE AND IN HIS SO-CALLED PRESS INTERVIEW AFTER ARRIVAL HE VENTED A CONSIDERABLE IRE AGAINST THE PRESS IN GENERAL ("THE MAJORITY OF JOURNALISTS LIKE TO TELL LIES"). APPARENTLY THIS STEMMED FROM AN ARTICLE IN THE DAILY TELEGRAPH DURING HIS VISIT WHICH WAS NOT ALTOGETHER FAVORABLE.

AFTER WATCHING DANCES OF "HIS WOMEN" AND VARIOUS VILLAGE GROUPS FOR TWO AND A HALF HOURS HE SPOKE FOR AN HOUR EMPHASIZING THAT HIS VISIT WAS A SUCCESS, MENTIONING HIS TALKS WITH WILSON, CALLAGHAN AND THE QUEEN AND HIS VISITS WITH OLD PATIENTS AND OTHER FRIENDS. AFTER TOUCHING ON VARIOUS OF HIS STANDARD SUCCESS THEMES HE TOLD HIS PEOPLE HOW MUCH HE HAD MISSED THEM, HOW GLAD HE WAS TO BE BACK, THAT HE KNOWS HE HAS THEIR FULL LOYALTY, THAT THE PARTY, THE POLICE, THE ARMY AND THE PEOPLE ARE UNITED UNDER HIM. "THEREFORE, HE SAID, IT WILL NOT ALLOW ANYONE, BLACK, BROWN OR WHITE, TO DISRUPT THE PEACE AND CALM, LAW AND ORDER THAT PREVAIL IN THIS COUNTRY. ANYONE WHO DOES SO WILL BE ARRESTED AND DETAINED INDEFINITELY WITHOUT TRIAL." HE FURTHER EMPHASIZED THIS THEME BY

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PAGE 02 BLANTY 00569 130127Z

SEVERAL SARCASTIC, DERISIVE REFERENCES TO HABEAS CORPUS MOCK-

INGLY MISPRONOUNCING THE WORDS AND STRESSING THAT THIS RIGHT DOES NOT EXIST IN MALAWI.

COMMENT: ON THIS BRIGHT NOTE THE HOMECOMING CERMONY ENDED AND MY FIRST REACTION WAS TO WONDER WHAT THOUGHTS LAY BEHIND THE IMPASSIVE FACE OF THE BRITISH EXPATRIATE JUDGE SITTING IN FRONT OF ME WHO IS THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF MALAWI. THE EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY HERE, LARGELY BRITISH, HAS BEEN UNEASY AND ANXIOUS FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS FOR FEAR PRES BANDA WAS DEEPLY OFFENDED BY THE PRESS TREATMENT HE RECEIVED IN ENGLAND AND REPORTEDLY BECAUSE OF A PARTICULAR TV PANEL INTERVIEW IN WHICH BANDA ALLEDGEDLY COMPLETELY LOST HIS TEMPER UNDER PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONING. HIS CLOSING REMARKS AT THE AIRPORT WILL NOT REASSURE THEM.

IT MAY BE NOTED THAT DURING BANDA'S ONE MONTH ABSENCE THE COUNTRY WAS COMPLETELY TRANQUIL AND HE APPEARED TO BE RECEIVED WITH CONSIDERABLE WARMTH BY HIS MINISTERS AND BY THE CROWD OF SEVERAL THOUSAND MALAWIANS WHO WELCOMED HIM AT THE AIRPORT AND ALONG THE ROAD INTO BLANTYRE.
STEVENSON

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NNN

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